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INNOVATION

STAC awards \$1.5M in research grants

By Ted Nesi
 PBN Staff Writer

PROVIDENCE – The R.I. Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC) today announced that it has awarded \$1.5 million in grants to seven collaborative research projects statewide.

The awards will be shared by 23 scientists from 10 institutions. Each project will receive about \$200,000.

A total of 40 research proposals were submitted for consideration. The following seven projects were chosen to receive funding:

- Development of a reliable stumble-detection system for artificial legs: He "Helen" Huang, University of Rhode Island; Susan E. D'Andrea, Brown University; Michael Nunnery, Nunnery Orthotic & Prosthetic Technologies Inc. Huang – an assistant professor in the Department of Electrical, Computer & Biomedical Engineering – was honored this fall with the 2008 Delsys Prize for her plan to "decode" neuromuscular data for use in the improvement of artificial limbs. ([READ MORE](#))
- Creation of an artificial human ovary: Jeffrey Morgan, Anubhav Tripathi, Brown University; Sandra Carson, Women & Infants Hospital.
- Develop a treatment technique to reduce bacterial buildup on medical devices: Keiko M. Tarquinio, Rhode Island Hospital; Thomas J. Webster, Brown University.
- Identify a novel protein found in patients suffering from pregnancy complications to develop a treatment: Surendra Sharma, James Padbury, Women & Infants Hospital; Zahir Shaikh, University of Rhode Island.
- Synthesize and develop novel neuroprotective drugs: John Marshall, Christopher Seto, Brown University; John Williams, Rhode Island College.
- Develop a renewable wave-energy-powered generator for free-floating ocean buoys: Raymond B. Sepe Jr., Steven P. Bastien, Electro Standards Laboratories; Malcolm L. Spaulding, Stephan T. Grilli, Annette R. Grilli-Delrez, University of Rhode Island.
- Develop a shallow-water Lagrangian float to track the path and rate of



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HE "HELEN" HUANG – an assistant professor in the URI Department of Electrical, Computer & Biomedical Engineering who in October was honored with the Delsys Prize – is one of three researchers sharing a Research Alliance grant to develop a better stumble-detection system for artificial legs.

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currents flowing in coastal waters: Henry Sharpe III, Bluewater Designworks LLC; Chris Roman, Chris Kincaid, University of Rhode Island; Thomas P. Uva, the Narragansett Bay Commission.

The R.I. Research Alliance and Collaborative Research Award Program is meant to foster and promote research collaborations among the state's academic and commercial institutions. It focuses on projects that eventually are expected to attract significant outside funding from government agencies, such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), or private investors.

In its first two years, the Research Alliance has awarded about \$3 million to 17 research teams from 29 different institutions. Those projects have since receive a combined total of \$1.6 million in follow-up funding, according to STAC.

At its meeting this afternoon at the R.I. Economic Development Corporation headquarters, in the American Locomotive Works (ALCO) development in Providence, STAC is slated to discuss the council's 2009 recommendations to the governor and the R.I. General Assembly. The STAC meeting also is to feature a presentation by James Fabiani, of government-relations firm Fabiani & Co. in Washington, D.C., about anticipated trends in federal spending and investment.

The R.I. Science and Technology Advisory Council (STAC) – winner of a [2008 Innovation Award](#) from Providence Business News and the R.I. Economic Development Corporation – was established in 2005 to help turn Rhode Island into a regional hub for the life sciences, information technology and other research-based industries. Its activities are financed via state and federal appropriations as well as public and private grants.

STAC's R.I. Research Alliance and Collaborative Research Award Program, launched in 2006, aims to encourage collaboration in the state's research and development community. For more information, or to apply for Research Alliance funding, contact Christine Smith at csmith@riedc.com or visit www.stac.ri.gov.

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